OTF/FEO Interaction ... on line

To be copied and shared with all members

INDEX **December 18, 1998, Volume 1, No. 4** OTF-FEO Home

Dear Colleagues,

As 1998 comes to an end, I want to add my voice to the many extending the best of the season to each one of you. I know that these past 12 months have been extraordinarily difficult for teachers - new elementary curriculum, new school boards, new report cards, new collective agreements and fewer teachers just to name a few of your challenges. I am never surprised at the professionalism teachers bring to their classrooms, but I am amazed at your capacity to cope with constant change. As we are on the verge of a new year, I want to wish every one of you a well-deserved rest over the break - even though I know there will still be marking and preparation to do. Happy new year to all!

On Friday December 11, the OTF Executive held its monthly meeting. Much of the time was spent on the details of our strategic plan. On January 23, 1999 there will be a meeting of all Branch Affiliate Presidents with the aim of sharing the details of the plan with the presidents. One of the activities of the plan, which is already underway, is a series of political action workshops for people who have never been politically active. Watch for notices in your schools.

Other issues addressed by the Executive at that meeting were the question of teacher supply and demand, and the successful legal case on pension benefits for people in same sex relationships. The President-designate of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Marilies Rettig also came to talk to the Executive.

OTF will be publishing an edition of *Interaction* early in the new year, so watch for it in your schools before the end of January.

Yours truly,

L Barkley

Liz Barkley

Political Action Workshops

These workshops (10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m.) are offered by OTF and the

Affiliates at no charge. You can learn how to become active in a political campaign, how to join a political party and how an election campaign works inside.

The schedule for the workshops is:

January 9, 1999	Ottawa-Carleton
January 30, 1999	Toronto - 2 workshops
February 13, 1999	Kitchener-Waterloo London
February 20, 1999	Hamilton/St.Catherines Cornwall
February 27, 1999	Chatham Peterborough
March 6, 1999	Mississauga/Halton Oshawa

If you are interested in taking part in one of these workshops, contact your local Affiliate president to register.

Teacher Supply and Demand

The Executive received a report from the Teacher Education Staff Work Group on the anticipated shortage of teachers in Ontario. The Committee reviewed the report of the Ontario College of Teachers, the Minister's Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Renewal and the current shortage in occasional teachers.

On the OCT report on teacher shortages, the Teacher Education Staff Work Group was guided by the importance of finding options which do not lower or compromise teacher qualification standards. The work group recommends looking at other jurisdictions such as the Untied Kingdom and the United States to see what others are using to solve this projected problem.

OTF and the Affiliates are represented on the Minister's Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Renewal and will be involved in intensive meetings between now and the end of January to develop a framework for action and recommendations.

A number of boards across the province have started to report shortages in occasional teachers. In response, some boards appear to be hiring unqualified personnel to serve as occasional teachers. These attempts have been reported to the College of Teachers. The College, in turn, has responded by contacting the Human Resources Departments of the boards in question, informing them of their legal obligations to hire qualified teachers.

Pension Benefits for Same Sex Partners

On December 7, 1998, Mr. Justice Rivard of the Ontario Court ruled that the definition of spouse in the Pension Benefits Act (PBA) was unconstitutional.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation intervened in a case brought by the Trustees of the OPSEU Pension Plan Trust Fund as the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan also operates under the (PBA). Before this decision, registered pension plans could provide benefits to same sex partners only through special arrangements outside the main plan. The ruling changes the definition of spouse in the PBA to allow for full coverage under registered pension plans. For more information you may contact Ronald Robert of OTF at ronarobe@enoreo.on.ca or the Pension Plan Board directly at www.otppb.com.

Canadian Teachers' Federation

Canadian Teachers' Federation President-designate, Marilies Rettig, past president of OECTA, updated the OTF Executive on the issue of Employment Insurance rules and their impact on teachers.

Since qualification for EI is now based on defined hours of work, eligibility for teachers has become an issue as there is no standard across the country. The Canadian Teachers' Federation continues to lobby the federal department of Human Resources to resolve this problem. The problem also affects eligibility for Maternity Benefits. CTF is keeping OTF informed of progress on this issue. If you are experiencing any difficulties with EI, you may contact David Aylsworth of this office at daviayls@enoreo.on.ca for more information.

Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF-FEO), 1300 Yonge Street, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M4T 1X3
Tel: 416-966-3424 Tollfree: 1-800-268-7061 Fax: 416-966-5450

Back to Index